LEVITICUS

*God calls Israel to be holy as he is holy*

SETTING

Right after the Tabernacle is erected (about 1445 BC)

KEY VERSE

*I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.*Gen 12:1-3

Last updated February 7, 2023

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a smooth transition from Exodus to Leviticus. Exodus concludes with Moses being unable to enter the Tabernacle because God had taken up residence there. On the next page, Leviticus begins, which explains how they can enter the tabernacle and what procedure applies. It seems that Leviticus 1:1 happens on the same day that they set up the tabernacle. Leviticus is a kind of handbook for priests to know what they have to do to maintain their relationship with God. And still, it is God who makes it possible for them to have a relationship with him.

Leviticus can be challenging to get through because all the sacrifices seem so distant to us. But the main point is also important in the NT: "be holy because I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45, 1 Pet 1:14-16, Heb 12:14). We are also called to live holy lives because God is holy.

The word "*holy*" is used over 90 times in Leviticus and means to be "*set apart*". The opposite of holy is "*ordinary*" and "*worldly*". God gave them these laws:

* so they can have a relationship with him
* to show them who He is - His holiness and character.
* to show them how He defines sin, how He forgives sin, and how they can avoid sin.
* to give them a better life. Many of the laws are related to hygiene, where they were far ahead of other cultures at the same time.

He does not give them the law to make it difficult for them. The laws provided better hygiene and protection. The Israelites should be "separated" from the other people around them. Some laws, which we may not understand, came as a result of their neighbors’ practices. The Israelites were not to do the same things because they were to be different people.

When we read the book of Leviticus, it is easy to be left with a sense of relief that we do not have to continue with all the sacrifices, but that is not the point of this book. If we get into this stuff properly, the following things will probably happen:

1. You long for God's holiness more often.
2. You will fear God more (not that you are afraid of God but with positive respect) when you see how holy he is. You see how holy, pure, and separate God is from the world and you, and how he calls the Israelites and you to a life characterized by his holiness to keep you away from sin.
3. You will take sin more seriously.
4. You will love your neighbor more (the only place in the OT where this is stated is Leviticus 19:18) because you will get many practical examples of how to love your neighbor.
5. You will love Jesus more when you see what his sacrifice meant in light of the sacrifices in Leviticus. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice that takes away all sin past, present and future for all people once and for all and makes it possible for you to have a relationship with a holy God.

All these different sacrifices we read about point to Jesus and are different aspects of his death on the cross. The book of Hebrews in particular explains this connection and how Jesus fulfilled all the sacrifices in the old covenant. Leviticus 16 and the Day of Atonement are especially important, where it becomes extra clear how Jesus is our high priest who has made atonement once and for all (Heb 9:23-28).

90% of Leviticus are quotes from God, which is more than in any other book in the entire Bible. Leviticus is about how sinful people can approach a holy God, about the way to God (Ch. 1-16) and the walk with God (Ch. 17-27). Is about holiness and living a holy life. This is still relevant:

"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:15-16)

“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” (Heb 12:14)

### HISTORICAL SETTING

The construction of the meeting tent was just finished, and God has taken up residence there. Then he gives these commandments - less than a month later, according to the time given in Numbers 1:1.

They already had the "Book of the Covenant" (Exodus 24:7), which contained the laws in Exodus 20-23.

*"Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, 'We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.'"* Exodus 24:7

### HOLY & NOT HOLY

*"so that you can distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean"* Lev 10:10

"Holy" is used over 90 times.

Holy = *"set apart"*. Opposite of *"worldly"/"ordinary"*.

God is distinct from the world in that He is completely pure in thought and attitude. Holy people/objects are separated from the world and *"set aside"* for God.

*"Holy"* is not quite the same as (ethically) *"sinless"*, and in 6:17 it means *"set apart"*:

*"It must not be baked with yeast; I have given it as their share of the food offerings presented to me. Like the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is most holy."* 6:17

The people were to be holy = different from other peoples

God is both holy and sinless. God's people are holy, but they are also called to be sanctified.

### CLEAN & UNCLEAN

Some overlap: Clean is not always holy, but holy is always clean.

Purity cannot be transferred, but impurity can.

It is not a sin to become unclean through ordinary conduct. The danger is to come near the sanctuary while one is unclean. If you do not purify yourself, it becomes disobedience.

"Clean" is used for "healthy" in 15:13-15. "Unclean" could mean "sick". Wholeness was pure, and incompleteness was impure.

*"When a man has an unusual bodily discharge: “‘When a man is cleansed from his discharge, he is to count off seven days for his ceremonial cleansing; he must wash his clothes and bathe himself with fresh water, and he will be clean. On the eighth day he must take two doves or two young pigeons and come before the Lord to the entrance to the tent of meeting and give them to the priest. The priest is to sacrifice them, the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement before the Lord for the man because of his discharge."* 15:13-15

As a metaphor, "pure" is also used about morals in the OT (and in the NT). "Clean hands" = a clean heart.

### CONSEQUENCES

Sex/fertility rituals could not become part of worship, which was common in other religions.

Contact with or worship of the dead could not take place since the priest had to stay far away from the dead.

### WHY DID GOD CREATE SUCH A COMPLICATED SYSTEM?

Answer: He didn't.

Different types of sacrifices were already common, for example, we see the following people making sacrifices to God: Cain, Abel, Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jethro, ...

The earliest archaeological traces of sacrifices date from the fourth millennium BC. Sacrifices were already common in other religions in connection with rituals, priests, holy mountains/places, holidays, purification rites, circumcision, ...

Not so strange for the first readers as it is for us. Rather logical, as a common way of getting in touch with the divine. Actually easy compared to other religions, in the Egyptian religion there were up to 62 actions three times a day.

By giving them the law, God brings these practices under his will. Not everything was completely new, but a lot was improved. Therefore, we can also say that God "speaks their language" and works with them "where they are".

God uses their rituals to show them who He is. He calls it holiness and purity.

Two important differences are that in other religions:

1. Blood was not used for purification.
2. Sin offerings and guilt offerings were unknown.

### STRUCTURE

Ch. 1-7: The various sacrifices

Ch. 8-10: Priests' consecration and first sacrifices

Ch. 11-15: Clean/unclean

Ch. 16: The Day of Atonement

Ch. 17-27: Holiness in everyday life

## CHAPTERS 1-7: THE DIFFERENT SACRIFICES

Chapter 1 The Burnt Offering

Chapter 2 The Grain Offering

Chapter 3 The Fellowship Offering

Chapter 4-5 The Sin Offering / Purification Offering (sliding transition in 5:1-13)

The Guilt Offering / compensation offering

Chapter 6 Priest's instructions: About the burnt, grain and sin offering

Chapter 7 Priest's instructions: About the guilt and fellowship offering + misc.

### THE BURNT OFFERING (CH. 1)

1. Why should the offering be a separate animal?

2. Why a male animal without defects?

3. Why should he put his hand on the animal's head?

4. Why should the one who performed the sacrifice do most of the work?

5. How could they know that the sacrifice was approved by God?

6. How could a bird be equal to a flawless bull?

### THE IMAGE OF SACRIFICE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Jesus:**

*"walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."* Eph 5:2

Jesus was a faultless sacrifice (Heb 9:14), *"without blemish or defect"* (1 Pet 1:18-19).

*"How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!"* Heb 9:14

*"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."* 1 Pet 1:18-19

**We:**

*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."* Romans 12:1

*"Become a holy priesthood and offer spiritual sacrifices, which God accepts with joy through Jesus Christ."* 1 Pet 2:5

*"Then through him let us continually present to God our praise as a sacrifice, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. But do not forget to do good and share with others, for such sacrifices are joy to God."* Heb 13:15-16

### SIN OFFERINGS & GUILT OFFERINGS (CH. 4-5)

For specified sins (especially in Ch. 5). Unique to the Law of Moses. "Forgiveness" is only mentioned in relation to these two sacrifices, which are linked to sin and guilt.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the sin offering: *"For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering."* Romans 8:3

Jesus as the fulfillment of the guilt offering in Isa 53:10:

*"Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand."* Isa 53:10

Jesus gives complete forgiveness:

Luk 24:47: *“and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*

Eph 1:7a: *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins”*

Heb 10:18 ERV: *"And after everything is forgiven, there is no more need for a sacrifice to pay for sins."*

## CHAPTER 10: NADAB & ABIHU

*“Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.”* 10:1-2

“unauthorized” (v. 1): strange, foreign (Jer 2:25), completely different, unlawful ( Leviticus 22:10, Numbers 1:51)

Was there influence from a "foreign" religion? It was common to perform a ritual when one was appointed as a priest in another religion.

Did they get the fire from somewhere other than the altar of burnt offering?

Did they go inside the curtain of the Holy of Holies? (16:1-2)

*"The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the Lord. The Lord said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover."* 16:1-2

Were they under the influence of alcohol? (vv. 8-11, rabbinical interpretation)

*“Then the Lord said to Aaron, “You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die.”* v. 8

*"God's holiness is like electricity. You cannot treat it as you like."* John Hartley

## CHAPTER 11: CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS

### Health reasons

Can't be the whole answer. Why is it then clean in the NT?

### From creation

Clear categories in Genesis 1: Land/water/air. Unclean animals can live in more than one of these categories. A reminder not to defile themselves by incorporating other peoples’ unclean religions and practices (20:25-26).

*“You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those that I have set apart as unclean for you. You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.”* 20:25-26

### Life and death

The clean is associated with life, health/wholeness and God, while the impure is associated with death and disease.

### FROM THE CREATION

**Water:** Clean animals (only fish) have fins and scales.

**Land:** Pure animals have split hooves and "chew the cud".

**Air:** Clean animals are birds that are not birds of prey, that do not swim, and that do not have four legs (insects).

All small animals that swarm on the ground are unclean. They are neither fish, birds nor land animals.

Unclean animals symbolized what Israel was to avoid: incorporating other peoples’ unclean religions and practices. They were to be like pure animals: separate, in their own category, and not have mixed features.

They were to stick to certain animals, just as God stuck to Israel to use them to bless the world.

Every meal would remind them of who they were.

### LIFE VS. DEATH

Reptiles remind them of the snake in Genesis 3.

Birds of prey and scavengers (animals that consume dead organisms that have died from causes other than predation or have been killed by other predators) and predators (an animal that naturally preys on others) symbolize death and therefore impurity because they come into contact with blood.

Boars and birds of prey were associated with wastelands and ruins, where demons were believed to reside.

Animals underground are associated with the underworld.

**Other laws:**

Sorcery and occultism also have to do with the underworld and are forbidden. The animals used for these other religions are unclean, hence preventing this practice.

Skin diseases (Ch. 13-14) show that life is disappearing. Same with houses and clothes.

Contact with dead animals or dead people defiles them.

### SOME APOLOGIES

v. 3: The Hebrew expression does not exactly mean "to chew the cud", but to chew the food properly.

*"You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud."* 11:3

v. 4: The camel has cloven hooves, but these are not visible.

*“The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you.”* 11:4

v. 5: The mountain badger does not chew much but chews almost all the time.

*“The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you.”* 11:5

v. 6: The hare does not chew the cud but occasionally eats a bit of its own excrement.

*“The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you.”* 11:6

v. 19: They classified the bat as a bird, so it was counted among the unclean birds.

It is backward to say that the Bible is wrong based on our modern definitions.

### MOST IMPORTANT

A reminder that they are called to be pure and holy before God, chosen from among the nations and *different* from them.

Just as he *set them apart* from the other nations, they had to separate clean from unclean food.

They would not be able to have table fellowship with other peoples and therefore could not participate in their pagan feasts.

These restrictions can be removed in the NT because the Jew/Gentile distinction no longer defines God's people.

*"'Are you so dull?' he asked. 'Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.' (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)"* Mark 7:18-19

*"He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' 'Surely not, Lord!' Peter replied. 'I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.' The voice spoke to him a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'"* Acts 10:11-15

*"I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean."* Romans 14:14

*"They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving"* 1 Tim 4:3-4

## CHAPTER 12: CLEANSING AFTER BIRTH

Why be unclean for 7 days + 33 days of waiting (40 days in total) for a boy and 14 days + 66 days of waiting (80 days in total) for a girl?

Common: Same sacrifice regardless of sex 🡪 both sexes equally worth (Genesis 1:27)

**Suggestion:**

1. Male chauvinistic culture. Similar in other religions. This was only valid for a time and changed in the new covenant (Gal 3:28).
2. *"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* Gal 3:28
3. Due to newborn girls' possible “mini-period” (due to their separation from the mother's estrogen)
4. The mother's impurity + the daughter's potential impurity during menstruation/birth.
5. More protection/rest for women
6. Because Israel was supposed to be different from the surrounding nations, where women often participated in sexual rituals in the temples.

## THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (CH.16)

Atonement = “covering sin”. Center of Leviticus (both in structure and theology).

1. The high priest must wash and dress in linen.
2. He first makes atonement for himself.
3. He makes a cloud of incense to hide the place of atonement.
4. The blood of the bull (his sacrifice) is sprinkled toward the place of atonement and in front of the place of atonement seven times.
5. The blood of the one goat (the people's sacrifice) is sprinkled on and in front of the place of atonement.
6. The blood from both animals is wiped and sprinkled seven times on the altar of the burnt offering.
7. He lays his hands on the second goat, confesses the sin of all the people, and sends it into the wilderness.
8. He re-enters the sanctuary, washes in a holy place, and changes into ordinary clothes.
9. He offers the two rams as a burnt offering for himself and the people.
10. The sin-offering bull and the sin-offering goat are burned outside the camp.

## THE SCAPEGOAT TO/FOR ASASEL

*"* *And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord and use it as a sin offering, but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel."* 16:8-10 ESV

Traditional interpretation: Azazel is the name of the goat and is composed of the two Hebrew words *ez* (goat) + *azel* (go away). But the goat is *for* and *to* Azazel; it is not Azazel itself.

Perhaps a name for a satyr (Greek mythological creature, similar to the faun in Roman mythology): a "nature demon" traditionally resembling a goat.

Was associated with the desert (see Isa 13:21, where *"goats"* is translated as *"demons"* in the Greek OT).

*“But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about.”* Isaiah 13:21

The sins that the goat carried were sent back to this demon so that they could be removed from the people and sent back to where they came from.

Similar practices exist among other peoples. It is common to think that evil and impurity must be removed from people at regular intervals.

Perhaps mostly to give a visual representation of the sin being removed. The goat takes the sins to an inaccessible place. Both goats are called *"sin offerings"* in v. 5, and they are used for *"making atonement"* in v. 10.

*"From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering."* 16:5

*"But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat."* 16:10

## LEVITICUS 16 🡪 JESUS

*"because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the Lord, you will be clean from all your sins."* 16:30

*"and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the tent of meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the members of the community."* 16:33

*"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."* Hebrews 10:1-4

*"But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!"* Heb 9:11-14

*"For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."* Heb 9:24-28

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| **Leviticus 16** | **Jesus** |
| The high priest had to offer sacrifices first for himself and then for the people. | Jesus is the holy and perfect high priest and does not need to do that (Heb 7:26-27). *“Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.”* Heb 7:26 |
| The high priest entered the sanctuary with the blood of the bull and the goat. | Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary with his own blood (Heb 9:12). |
| The blood of goats and bulls makes holy and clean on the outside (Heb. 9:13). | Jesus' blood cleanses the conscience (Heb 9:14). |
| The high priest presented flawless animals. | Jesus presented himself as a faultless sacrifice (Heb 9:14). |
| The blood was carried into the sanctuary, but the animals were burned outside the camp. | *"Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate."* (Heb 9:12) |
| The scapegoat took away the sins of the people. | Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). |
| The high priest entered the Holy of Holies  once a year. | Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary once and for all (Heb 9:12). |
| God appeared in the cloud above the place of atonement, which was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. | God comes to us through Jesus, who is the new place of atonement (Romans 3:25).  *“God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.”* Rom 3:25a |

*"Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."* Heb 10:19-22

## STRUCTURE OF CHAPTERS 17-27: SANCTITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Ch. 17: The right place of sacrifice & prohibition of eating blood

Ch. 18-20: Moral purity

Ch. 21-22: The priests

Ch. 23-25: Holidays, the Sabbath Year, and the Year of Jubilee

Ch. 26: Covenant blessings and covenant curses

Ch. 27: Redemption of sacred gifts

## CHAPTER 18: DO NOT DO AS THE EGYPTIANS AND CANAANITES

v. 3: *"You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices."*

vv. 6-23: Incest, adultery, the sacrifice of children to the god Molek, homosexual acts, sex with animals...

vv. 24-28: *“Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the foreigners residing among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.”*

### MOLEK (18:21, 20:2-5)

Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice. Both cruelty *and* idolatry.

"*On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites."* (1 Kings 11:7)

*"He desecrated Topheth, which was in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, so no one could use it to sacrifice their son or daughter in the fire to Molek."* (2 Kings 23:10)

*"They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molek, though I never commanded—nor did it enter my mind—that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin."* (Jer 32:35)

## CHAPTER 19

The key verse is repeated in v. 2

Most of the Ten Commandments are repeated

*"I am the Lord your God"* (7 in this chapter, 21 in total in Leviticus). Mentioned more in chapter 19 than in any other book in the Bible. Everything springs from the relationship with God. The Ten Commandments also open with this.

v. 3: Reverence for parents is holiness.

vv. 9-14: Helping the poor and not oppressing anyone is holiness.

v. 15: To judge righteously is holiness.

vv. 16-17: Not to slander is holiness.

v. 18: To love one's neighbor is holiness (only mentioned here in the OT).

vv. 33-34: Treating immigrants well is holiness.

vv. 35-36: Honesty in business is holiness.

### Themes in Leviticus that are repeated in the New Testament

Sanctification 11:44-45, 19:2, 20:7, 26 Matt 5:48, 2 Cor 7:1, 1 Thess 4:3, 7,

1 Pet 1:15-16, Heb 12:14

Sex with stepmother 18:8, 20:11, 1 Cor 5:1

Sex with sister-in-law 18:16, 20:21, Matt 14:3-4

Sex with another's wife 18:20, 20:10, Matt 5:28, 15:19, 19:18, Rom 13:9, 1 Cor 6:9,

Gal 5:19, Heb 13:4, Jas 2:11

Sex with same gender 18:22, 20:13 , Rom 1:26-27, 1 Cor 6:9, 1 Tim 1:10, Jud 1:7

Honor parents 19:3, 20:9, Matt 15:4-6, 19:19, Rom 1:30, Eph 6:1-3, 1 Tim 1:9,

2 Tim 3:2

Idolatry 19:4, 1 Cor 6:9, 10:14, Gal 5:20, 1 John 5:21, Rev 21:8, 22:15

Remember the poor 19:10, Rom 15:26, 2 Cor 8-9, Gal 2:10

Do not steal 19:11, Matt 15:19, 19:18, Rom 13:9, 1 Cor 6:8, 10, Eph 4:28,

1 Pet 4:15, Rev 9:21

Do not lie 19:11 , Matt 15:19, Acts 5:3-4, Eph 4:25, Col 3:9, 1 Tim 1:10, Rev 21:8

Do not swear falsely 19:12, Matt 5:33-34, 15:19, 19:18, Jas 5:12

Do not oppress 19:13, Mark 10:42-45, James 5:4

Do not be partial 19:15, Jas 2:6-9

Do not slander 19:16, Matt 15:19, Rom 1:30, 1 Tim 3:11, 2 Tim 3:3, Tit 2:3, 3:2,

Eph 4:31

Do not hate your brother 19:17, 1 John 2:9, 11, 3:14, Titus 3:3

Do not retaliate 19:18, Matt 5:43-44, Rom 12:17, 19, Eph 4:31, Col 3:8, 1 Pet 2:1

Love your neighbor 19:18, Matt 19:19, 22:39, Rom 13:9, Gal 5:14, Jas 2:8

Do not practice divination 19:31, 20:6 , Gal 5:20, Rev 9:21, 21:8, 22:15

Do not blaspheme 24:15-16, 1 Tim 1:13, 20, 6:1

Do not kill 24:17, 21, Matt 5:21-22, 15:19, Rom 13:9, 1 Tim 1:9, Jas 2:11,

1 Pet 4:15, 1 John 3:15

Do not resort to violence 24:18-20, Rom 1:30, 1 Tim 1:13, 1 Tim 3:3, 2 Tim 3:3, Tit 1:7

### 19:19

*“‘Keep my decrees. “‘Do not mate different kinds of animals. “‘Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. “‘Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.”* 19:19

Mindset: Consistently don't mix! They were to be different and belong to God.

## CAN WE CATEGORIZE THE LAWS?

### 1. SACRIFICES

E.g., chapters 1-5. All these were fulfilled by Jesus once and for all.

*“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.”* Heb 9:12

### 2. HYGIENE

*"If anyone becomes aware that they are guilty—if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean (whether the carcass of an unclean animal, wild or domestic, or of any unclean creature that moves along the ground) and they are unaware that they have become unclean, but then they come to realize their guilt"* (5:2)

*“These are the regulations for any diseased person at the time of their ceremonial cleansing, when they are brought to the priest: The priest is to go outside the camp and examine them…The person to be cleansed must wash their clothes, shave off all their hair and bathe with water; then they will be ceremonially clean. After this they may come into the camp, but they must stay outside their tent for seven days.”* (14:2-3a, 8)

### 3. CIVIL LAWS

*"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly."* (19:15)

*"When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For three years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased. I am the Lord your God."* (19:23-25)

*"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."* (19:33-34)

### 4. ANTI-CANAANITE LAWS

v. 26: “Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it. Do not practice divination or seek omens.” (as in pagan customs)

"Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard." 19:27 (probably because the Canaanites "sacrificed" some of their hair to appease the spirits of the dead)

v. 28: *“Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord.”* (as in Baal worship)

Israel was called to be different.

### 5. LAWS THAT REFLECT GOD'S CHARACTER

*“Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.”* 19:11

*“Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.”* 19:12

*"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly."* 19:15

## DEATH PENALTY (CH. 20)

Sin had to be dealt with drastically, and the entire people had to respond.

The wages of sin is death. All sin deserves the death penalty.

The point of these laws was to prevent this from happening.

Paul uses the death penalty in the OT in a figurative sense of expelling a sinner from the congregation (1 Cor 5:2, 13). *“Expel the wicked person from among you”* refers to how you will rid yourself of evil (9 times in Deuteronomy).

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) and 1 Cor 11:29-30: *"For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep."*

*"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* Heb 10:26-31

## NO ONE WITH A DEFECT CAN MAKE A SACRIFICE (21:16-23)

To come before God with a defect is to *"desecrate my sanctuary"* (v. 23)

But he can eat God's food (the sacrifice) (v. 22). Symbolizing that he was God's guest and no less worthy.

*"He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary."* 21:22-23

But no impurity/defect should enter the sanctuary because:

1. It symbolized God's holiness and perfection.
2. Nothing that comes from the Fall of Man will be able to be in the presence of God. It points to the fact that he is going to restore everything and not allow anything to be damaged or defective anymore.

## THE YEAR OF JUBILEE (CHAPTER 25)

*"Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan."* (v. 10)

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* (Luke 4:18-19)

Freedom can also be translated as forgiveness. The Year of Jubilee pointed to and was fulfilled by Jesus, who truly sets us free.

## CHAPTER 26: THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF THE COVENANT

The curses (vv. 18, 23, 27) are not a punishment but a way to make them wake up. (Called *"sign"* in Deuteronomy 28:46).

v. 31: It does not help to sacrifice when they do not live right.

vv. 32-33: Exile is the final consequence of breaking the covenant.

vv. 38-39: The fate of the Northern Kingdom.

v. 44: The covenant still applies in exile, even though the people do not deserve it. God keeps his part of the agreement regardless of whether the people are unfaithful.

## SACRIFICE VS. HEART

*"But Samuel replied: 'Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For*

*rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.'"* 1 Sam 15:22-23

*"I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"* Amos 5:21-24

*"For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."* Hos 6:6

*"What do I care about incense from Sheba or sweet calamus from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please me."* Jer 6:20

*"Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague."* Jer 14:12

*"The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him."* Proverbs 15:8

## WHAT DOES LEVITICUS MEAN FOR US IN THE NEW COVENANT TODAY?

1. Leviticus is about the way to God and the walk with God. God is the same; he is just as holy now, and holiness is still the way to him (through Jesus) and the way to follow him (through the Spirit).
2. We are called to holy lives in the NT too, but what does that mean? The book of Leviticus demonstrates how holiness ("set aside for God") can manifest itself in everyday life.
3. God calls us to be different from the world. We are called to become more like Jesus, not more like other people.